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ROMANS 16 AND THE TENT MAKERS

Dr. George K. Barr

The Study of trade and tentmaking in the first century provides a possible scenario for the movements of Aquila and Priscilla which are suggested by references in the Book of Acts and by greetings in the Pauline epistles. It also provides a reason for Paul's appeal for unity in Romans, his warnings, and his greetings in Romans 16 to so many friends in a city which he had not previously visited.

The construction of the Epistle to Romans

The initial stimulus for this study is found in the surprisingly long list of greetings to members of the congregation in Rome which is found in Romans 16. Added to that are the puzzling movements of Aquila and Priscilla which are reflected in greetings to or from them in other Pauline epistles.

Regarding the general construction of Romans, C.K. Barrett in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* summarises the positions occupied by the Grace and the Doxology. The Grace occurs variously at 16:20b and at 16:24 but is omitted in some important texts. The Doxology may be found in various texts at the end of chapters 14, 15 or 16. Barrett is content to show how permutations of the sections represented by 1-14, 15 and 16 produced the different forms which are found in the various MSS. T.W. Manson in *To the Romans - And Others* (Essay in *The*

Romans Debate, ed. by Karl P. Donfried, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977, pp.1-16) considered the possibility that an original corresponding to 1-15 had been sent to Rome, and a further copy with the greetings of Chapter 16 added, sent to the congregation in Ephesus. Further versions represent intermixtures of these types of text with Marcion's version which ended at 14:23. Manson thus attempts to explain Paul's greetings to so many people whom he could hardly be expected to know in Rome.

Scalometric analysis shows clearly that the prime pattern representing the material which Paul dictated in one operation covers Chapters 1-14, and that Chapters 15 and 16 may be regarded as afterthoughts. Fig. 1 compares the graphs of the sentence sequences of 1-14 with that of a computer model derived from two characteristic features of Pauline works, firstly the cyclic pattern of groups of long and short sentences, and secondly the contrast between the opening high scale portion (usually greetings and theological material) and the latter low scale portion (usually ethical material). Fig. 1 also gives the graphs of 15 and 16, with the Doxology showing clearly at the end of Chapter 16 (See also "Scale and the Pauline Epistles", *IBS* 17, Jan. 1995, pp. 22-41).

The problems posed by Chapter 16 are the long list of greetings to people in a community which some scholars assume Paul did not know, and the admonition concerning those who provoke divisions which may not be appropriate in the Roman situation. Manson's attempt to solve these problems was a literary solution, but one which paid little attention to other circumstances pertaining to these times. This present study considers some of these circumstances, but as evidence in some important areas is scanty, the best that can be done is to outline a plausible scenario from the facts that are available.

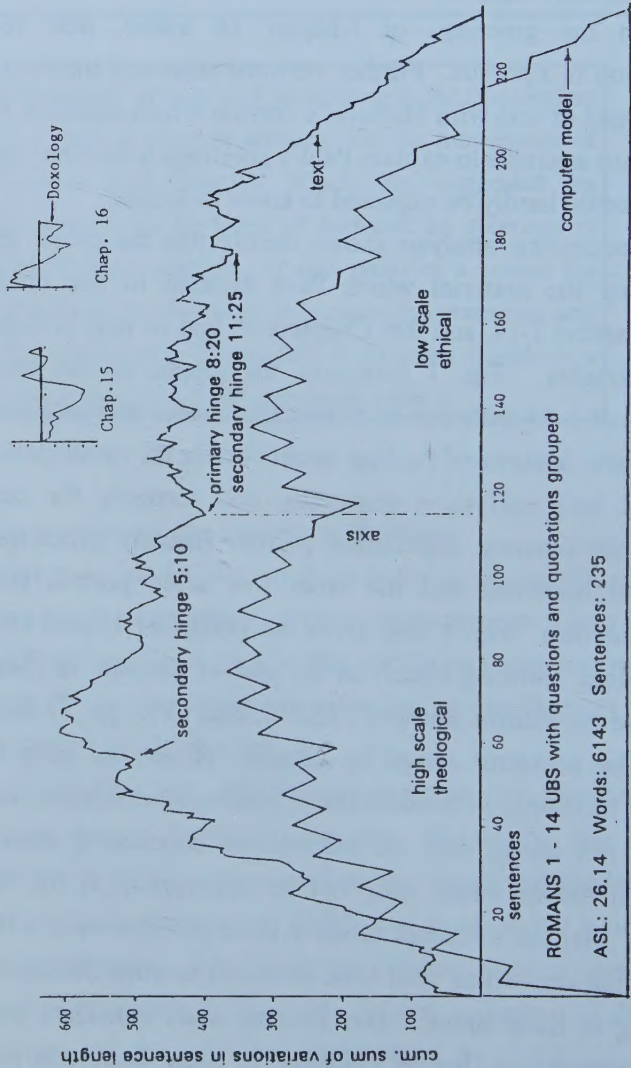


Fig. 1 Cumulative sum graph of Romans 1-14 compared with computer model. These chapters represent the first stage in the writing of the epistle and consist of a high scale theological first half matched by a low scale ethical second half. Each half has a similar number of sentences but with a substantial difference in the average sentence length. Similar "prime patterns" are found in each of the thirteen Pauline epistles. Chapters 15 and 16 have "afterthought" patterns.

Aquila and Priscilla

The movements of Aquila and Priscilla reflected in the texts of the various epistles require an explanation. They were apparently expelled from Rome during the "Chrestus" riots in the time of Claudius. Most scholars accept a date of AD 49, though Murphy-O'Connor would relate the occasion to another incident in AD 41. They worked with Paul in the craft of tent-making in Corinth and then went with Paul to Ephesus; Paul includes greetings **from** them in 1 Corinthians. In the Epistle to Romans Paul includes greetings **to** them (in Rome, or if Manson is correct, in Ephesus). In 2 Timothy Paul sends greetings **to** them in Ephesus. In Corinth Paul worked with Aquila and Priscilla in the craft of tent-making or leather-working which had been the craft of the latter in Rome.

The crafts of tent-making using a cloth of goat's hair (*cilicium*) and working in leather and linen appear to have been carried out by the same artisans. The reconstruction of the Tabernacle in Exodus indicates that tents might be covered by either tent-cloth or skins. This raises some interesting questions. Was it possible for Paul to earn a living during his missionary journeys by tent-making? What were Jewish tentmakers doing in Rome? Who were their customers there? Lietzmann (*History of the Early Church* 1, 80) indicates that Jews in the Dispersion took with them considerable skills in weaving and dyeing but regrets that we have no records concerning the economic rôle of the Jews in Rome.

Were Aquila and Priscilla more than tentmakers - possibly textile importers? C.H. Dodd (1959, p.15) suggests that as they had a church in their house they were people in a large way of business who travelled widely. Aquila came from Pontus and may have opened branches in Ephesus and Corinth. When he and Priscilla

were expelled from Rome they needed only to appoint a non-Jewish *procurator* to continue the business there. The priority given to Priscilla in many references may suggest that she belonged to a Roman family of some note. Findlay (1934, p.26) suggests that she may have been 'a great Roman lady or a freedwoman of the "gens Prisca" who had taken the name of that ancient and honourable house'. The most important customers in Rome must have been the Roman army with a large annual requirement of tent coverings' and the Roman navy with a substantial annual requirement of sailcloth. It is plausible to imagine Aquila as a young Jewish entrepreneur married to a girl from a family of wealthy and influential traders supplying the needs of the Roman army and navy. It may be noted that Aquila and Priscilla are not to be directed, as Paul directed Timothy or Titus, but are free agents combining the responsibilities of their business with their service to the Christian community.

Supplies of *Cilicium*

The most important source of *cilicium* was indeed Cilicia, of which Tarsus, Paul's home town was the major city with a tradition in weaving and dyeing. Cilicia became a Roman province in 67 BC and became noted for the export of goat-hair cloth used in tent-making - hence *cilicium* (a cloth of goat's hair used by soldiers and seamen), *cilicarius* (a maker of hair coverings) and *cilicinus* (made of hair cloth and associated with *tentoria*). It is unclear, however, to what extent *cilicium* was used in the manufacture of tents for the Roman army. Fragments of leather tents have been found by archaeologists in England. It cannot be assumed, however, that such tents were typical of those issued to the rank and file throughout the Empire. Haircloth does not survive to be found in archaeological excavations as leather does. It is unlikely that linen

was used for army tents though it may have been used in sailcloth. Curiously, Murphy-O'Connor refers to linen awnings and leather tents (1996, 85-89) but makes no reference to *cilicium*.

To keep tents in repair for twenty eight legions which had a large measure of mobility would require an annual supply of some 80,000 square metres of material, skins or goat-hair cloth (based on a tent of ten by ten Roman feet for eight men and the replacement of sections on a five to six year cycle). While supplies at the boundaries of the Empire were usually obtained by requisitions placed upon cities, substantial quantities were required in the vicinity of Rome.

The mobility of the legions was astonishing. When trouble arose in Britain, for example, legions were brought in from the Rhine. This involved daily route marches, each soldier carrying up to sixty pounds weight of equipment including personal arms, bedding, rations and sundry implements. For each section of eight men, a beast of burden (pony, mule or camel) carried a tent and millstones. At the end of each day's march a camp was established, always laid out on exactly the same lines with a temporary defensive turf wall and ditch. The secret of this mobility lay in the constant repetition of the same routines with which all soldiers were familiar. The tent was a vital part of the system which allowed flexibility in controlling the boundaries of the Empire.

Trade Routes

Antioch in Syria, the third city of the Empire and from 64 BC the eastern capital, was the point at which the Silk Route met the established trade route to Rome. The Silk Route, bringing jade and silk some 4,000 miles from Xi'an to exchange for wool, gold and silver from Rome, involved a hazardous journey and business was probably speculative. The trade routes within the Empire, however,

were comparatively secure and allowed the movement of materials by contract. The trade route from Antioch to Rome corresponds with part of Paul's so-called third journey, from Antioch through Cilicia, across Asia Minor to Ephesus which was the major port at the mouth of the Cayster River, and thence by sea to Cenchreae and Corinth and so on to Rome. The alternative route was to strike north from Pisidian Antioch through Phrygia and Bithynia to the Bosphorus, and thence by the Egnatian Way to Apollonia or Dyrrhachium on the Adriatic. The short crossing to Brundisium took the traveller on to the Appian Way which led to Rome. Bulk supplies of *cilicium* were brought by caravan to Ephesus where an agent and storage facilities were needed until shipment could be arranged to Corinth. Similar facilities were also required in Corinth for the shipment of materials to Rome.

If Aquila and Priscilla were engaged in such contract work they would have had depots at Corinth and Ephesus. Expulsion from Rome by Claudius meant expulsion from the city, but not necessarily from the country. Nevertheless they may have found it more convenient to retire with their associates along the trade route to their next depot in Corinth to continue their work there, leaving a *procurator* to look after their interests in Rome.

The Roman Church

The Early Church spread through families and through groups of friends. It also spread through trade associations which were common both in Jewish and Roman societies. In Tarsus, the Cilician capital, the linen weavers banded together to fight for equality with freemen. The Roman *collegium* united groups of craftsmen, businessmen, priests or soldiers in a cult organisation with an emphasis on social obligation. Carpenters' and builders' were the most numerous, followed by leather-workers', dyers' and

fullers'. Tentmakers did not work in isolation; they were part of a community of weavers, dyers, cord makers, carpenters etc. In Rome the congregation may well have consisted of such a network of business associates, Aquila and Priscilla being important members. This network may have comprised several families, amounting to a few dozen persons initially, all of Jewish origin and forming a close-knit community held together by Christian fellowship and by business ties. The edict of Claudius would apply to them all and they may have held together and retired en masse to the depot at Corinth in AD 49.

There Paul met Aquila and Priscilla, and possibly the other members of the Roman congregation, and worked with them at their common craft. These members of the Roman congregation would have been in Corinth through at least part of the period of Paul's Corinthian correspondence (which may be dated between Spring AD 54 and autumn AD 56) and would be familiar with the contents of 1 Corinthians. They were able to return to Rome to resume business there after the death of Claudius (AD 54) and before the writing of the Epistle to Romans (possibly Spring AD 56).

Paul and Tent-making

The SKENOPOIOI or tentmakers of Acts 18:3 were the makers of tents, tabernacles, or any temporary shelter, using *cilicium*, leather or linen. The word covers a variety of manual skills. The tents with which Paul would be most familiar would be the goat-hair tents of the nomadic tribes, a form of the black tent which is ubiquitous from Morocco to eastern Tibet. In the nomadic tribes the tent covering is woven on a ground loom in strips a cubit wide, joined together into sections about two metres wide. The material is like a

very heavy blanket and not at all like modern lightweight duck. The size of a tent is reckoned in camel loads and the covering is divided into sections accordingly. Indeed it was the domestication of the dromedary and the Bactrian camel which made nomadic tent-dwelling life possible.

St. Paul did not have a camel, and in view of the outlay and transport required it is unlikely that he engaged in the making of new tents during his missionary journeys. Tent-making cannot be done as simply as knitting a sock, but requires considerable outlay, transport and the co-operation of others in the craft. The references to Paul supporting himself and his colleagues through his manual work (1 Cor. 4:12f, 9:6-18, Acts 20:33,34) probably refer to more general labours and repairs using his manual skills. Only when he came to Corinth and met with Aquila and Priscilla and their friends did he have the opportunity to engage in tent-making. There, as 2 Cor. 11:9 shows, Paul did not appear to receive payment for his labours as he was supported by the brethren from Macedonia.

Murphy-O'Connor (1996, 86f) imagines that Paul chose tentmaking as a means of livelihood during his stay in Damascus where he became conscious of his need to be self-sufficient during a mobile ministry. He does not consider the possibility that Paul's family may have been involved in the craft in Tarsus which was a centre for the production of *cilicium* and the crafts associated with weaving, and that Paul may have acquired skills as a boy. Did Paul's father receive his Roman citizenship in recognition of services rendered in supplying *cilicium* to the Roman forces?

Gaps in the Evidence

The greatest difficulty lies in the fact that the writing classes who left records of Greek and Roman life considered manual labour and trade generally to be unworthy and consequently there are immense

gaps in the record of commercial life. Land-owning which produced wealth was considered honourable; trade which produced wealth was generally considered dishonourable, except perhaps for some luxury trades like purple dyeing which was acceptable if it made the participant wealthy enough. There is simply no record telling who, for example, produced the 200,000 sq. ft. of sailcloth needed for the two hundred triremes which the Athenians built after 483 BC or who produced the sailcloth for Roman vessels of up to a thousand tonnes burden. From the first century, African pottery was distributed widely throughout the Mediterranean but this immense commercial enterprise is never mentioned in any ancient literary source. Some army supplies in the later period (including weaving and purple-dying plant for large scale state contracts during Diocletian's tetrarchy between 284 and 305) were produced by state factories, but in the first century these were generally obtained by requisitions laid upon cities in the remoter parts of the Empire or by contract in the vicinity of Rome. The extent of the use of skins and *cilicium* in the manufacture of Roman tents is unknown. Rome itself required enormous quantities of materials annually, including about 200,000 tonnes of wheat per year, Sicilian corn, African oil and Spanish fish sauce. The goods needed to sustain Rome were obtained by negotiated public contracts and by taxation throughout the Empire. The *publicani* (the Biblical publicans) who acted as agents often became ship-owners and wholesalers but their activities are seldom recorded.

A Scenario

The first century saw an increase in the surplus produced in the Mediterranean basin and a great increase in the amount of coinage in circulation. There were exceptional opportunities for entrepreneurs among whom we might expect to find Jews of the

Dispersion. As transport was comparatively expensive, most produce was consumed locally. Rome, however, required vast quantities to sustain her population and her army. Factories were known in Greek times but only in the later Roman period are factories found to produce significant quantities of goods for the army. As trade was not an acceptable social occupation, even the largest economic developments go unrecorded. A degree of standardisation found in Roman armour and equipment in the first century suggests that contracts were governed by specifications given to suppliers.

It is suggested that Aquila and Priscilla were more than simple tentmakers, and were in fact involved in the importation of *cilicium* to Rome and the manufacture of tents for the Roman army. They gathered a congregation round them in Rome, consisting initially of Jews associated with them in the various crafts which were involved in tent-making. In AD 49, when Claudius dealt with riots by expelling the Jews, Aquila and Priscilla and their Christian friends who were also colleagues in their craft, left Rome and retired to Aquila's depot at Corinth leaving a non-Jewish *procurator* in charge of their interests in Rome.

In Corinth they continued in business, receiving *cilicium* from the Tarsus area, manufacturing tents and forwarding them to Rome. Paul joined them and worked with them for a time. Then he went to Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla accompanied him as they already had a depot in Ephesus where *cilicium* was stored ready for the sea passage to Corinth. A Christian congregation was associated with their premises there. The Christians from Rome must have formed a considerable proportion of the Corinthian congregation, and would have remained there through at least part of the period of Paul's Corinthian correspondence (c.AD 54-55). They took part in the troubles which engendered that correspondence. In 1 Cor. Paul

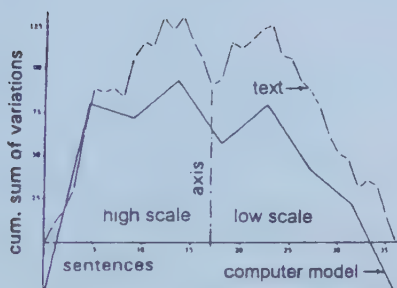
conveys to them the greetings of Aquila and Priscilla and the church that met in their premises in Ephesus.

After the death of Claudius in AD 54, the way was clear for Aquila and Priscilla and their Jewish colleagues to return to Rome. **This event provided the occasion for the writing of the Epistle to Romans**; Paul wanted to be sure that the members from Rome had left the Corinthian troubles behind and were soundly established in faith. And so when Paul writes his epistle to Romans in AD 55 or 56, he not only sends his greetings to Aquila and Priscilla, but names the many members of the congregation with whom he had worked in Corinth. As he writes Romans, Paul's mind goes back to the troubles which had arisen when these friends were in Corinth. In 1:10ff he tries to be conciliatory. His appeal for unity in Chapters 12 and 15 may reflect the divisions he had to deal with in the Corinthian congregation and which are referred to in 1 Corinthians. The Corinthian correspondence points to some of the problems experienced by new Christians in a pagan world, but also hints at the growing conflict with the Judaisers which developed possibly from AD 52 and with which Paul dealt in detail in his epistle to Galatians (Murphy-O'Connor AD 53, Kümmel AD 54-55). It is not surprising in view of that recent development, that Paul should include in his letter to Romans, the sharp admonition in 16:17-20 referring to Jewish food laws. The members of the Roman church who had spent time in Corinth also knew about the collection for Jerusalem mentioned in Romans 15:31. Paul writes the letter in Greece during his three month stay there in AD 55-56 (Acts 20:3) and sends it by the hand of Phoebe, a member of the congregation in Cenchreae who is going to Rome.

In due course, Paul himself arrived in Rome, and wrote to Timothy who had been left in charge in Ephesus to do his best to salvage a bad situation there. Scalometric analysis shows that the

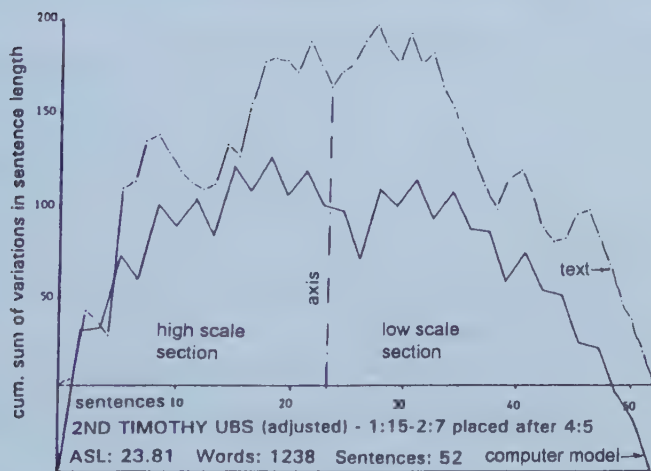
two letters to Timothy require slight adjustment to reveal the Pauline characteristics of the construction. Fig. 2 shows the prime patterns of the two epistles compared with the same computer model which was employed in the comparison with Romans in Fig. 1 but in this figure the model is shown at less complex levels; however, the characteristics underlying each level of the model are identical. The prime pattern of 1 Timothy ends at 5:7, the remainder constituting afterthoughts. 1 Tim 3:1-13, which like the parallel passage in Titus refers to qualities required in church leaders, is probably a marginal second century addition which has subsequently been incorporated in the text and should be removed. It does not belong to the prime pattern; neither do verses 14-16. The passage concerning bishops has misled many scholars into thinking that 1 Timothy is a pseudonymous second century work, but if it is excised, then a more primitive church order is revealed in the remaining text. 2 Tim. 1:15-2:7 is misplaced and should be located after 4:5; this is a matter of one page being displaced. These minor adjustments restore the Pauline prime patterns. At the time when Paul wrote 2 Timothy, Aquila and Priscilla were visiting their depot in Ephesus and were in touch with the associated house church there. Paul, being aware of their plans through the Christian community in Rome, included greetings to them in Ephesus.

With such a scenario, Romans 16 is seen to belong to the original epistle, and the movements of Aquila and Priscilla suggested by the greetings in other epistles fall into place. Chapters 15 and 16 do not, however, form part of the prime pattern which comprises the material which Paul first thought through and dictated in one operation. Rather they are in the nature of afterthoughts, added to the epistle a short time later. Some academics are perhaps too ready to expect perfection of construction and complete continuity in an epistle such as Romans.



1ST TIMOTHY Souter (adjusted) 1:1-5:7 with 3:1-16 omitted

ASL: 21.97 Words: 791 Sentences: 36



2ND TIMOTHY UBS (adjusted) - 1:15-2:7 placed after 4:5

ASL: 23.81 Words: 1238 Sentences: 52 computer model

Fig. 2 Cumulative sum graphs of 1 and 2 Timothy compared with computer model. These epistles correspond to less complex versions of the model than that appropriate to Romans. Nevertheless, all three levels are based on exactly the same mathematics.

Barr, **Romans 16**, *IBS* 20 June 1998

That can not be expected in an epistle written in three distinct sessions as Romans was, and it is not unreasonable to find epistolary conclusions to these afterthoughts at 15:33 and 16:20ff.

One must also remember the change in the nature of meetings conducted by Paul over these two critical years from AD 54-56. The confrontations with traditional Jews which had often ended in disorder and violence had become diets of worship with fellow Christians. The sermon had taken the place of debate, and the doxology had taken the place of disorder. It is entirely plausible that Paul, on the last of these three sessions in writing his epistle to the Romans, should fill the remaining space in his parchment with his friends' greetings and conclude the epistle with an ascription of glory like those which he had become accustomed to using in worship with his fellow Christians. With a scenario such as this, it appears likely that the original form of the epistle to Romans was in fact the form in which we now have it.

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David C. Norrington, *To Preach or not to Preach?: The Church's Urgent Question*. England, Paternoster Press, P.O. Box 300, Carlisle, CA3 0QS. 1996, £12.00

Here is some advice for would-be preachers - Don't preach! David Norrington argues that the sermon is not Christian in origin. He further claims that the sermon does not and indeed cannot advance the kingdom of God effectively. By insisting on preaching the church is pouring energy and expectation into a method of communicating the gospel which is counterproductive. Norrington writes:

“... in the New Testament churches the growth into spiritual maturity of both individuals and communities was achieved by a variety of means, which did not include the regular sermon. Indeed the experience of the churches and current knowledge about the learning process suggest that regular use of the sermon tends to have harmful consequences. It frequently fails to instruct; it deskills; it fosters an unhealthy dependence on the clergy. In these ways, the regular sermon not only fails to promote spiritual growth but also intensifies the impoverishment of Christian life which characterises large areas of the church today” (page 115).

But if this is so, how did preaching gain such a stranglehold on the church? Norrington sees the rot setting in back in the first century when the church began to adopt the assumptions and mind-set of the pagan world, and especially the enthusiasm for Greco-Roman rhetoric which prevailed among all educated people.

Norrington defines a sermon as “a speech concerned with biblical, ethical and related material, designed to increase understanding and to promote godly living amongst the listening congregation, delivered by someone in good standing with the local Christian

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community and addressed primarily to the faithful in the context of their own gatherings.”

Speeches in the New Testament do not conform to this definition. They are delivered largely to outsiders in a missionary setting or else are occasional utterances at times of crisis or farewell. Norrington provides a detailed study of the teaching methods of Jesus which include enigmatic sayings, Jewish history, visual aids, familiar ideas, figures of speech, irony, poetry, logic, problem-solving, humour, etc. the disciples “were not just given a barrage of right answers in order to become orthodox talking-machines” (page 7). He also analyses passages which suggest the use of sermons (e.g. Romans 1:15; 1 Corinthians 1:21 Colossians 1:28; 1 Timothy 4:13 etc). In each case he argues that what is envisaged is not preaching in our modern use of the term.

Moreover, the early church, without our kind of preaching, was highly successful. Norrington argues that the primitive Christian community used small groups as a means of encouraging one another in Christian living. He writes:

“The group provides encouragement, counsel, correction (Heb.3:12f), the possibility of conversation, communal prayer, a guide to the interpretation of Scripture, knowledge and gifts - all of which help the Christian to become Christ-like and to tackle problems in a Christ-like manner” (page 60).

He goes on to quote a former president of the American Psychological Association, O.Hobart Mowrer, who claimed that “the early Christian church was the most powerful therapeutic community that ever existed.”

Norrington cannot be accused of not backing up opinions with facts. He has put a huge amount of scholarly research into this book and each of his chapters is accompanied by a multitude of footnotes. He backs up his thesis with meticulous attention to the

Biblical scholarship. Here is no dissaffected maverick, but a serious voice questioning what the Church takes for granted.

In response to Norrington's hard-hitting arguments, one must agree that the church should rediscover the value of small groups for promoting the Christian life. The mainline churches have been too shy of intimate gatherings as a means of encouraging faith, hope and love.

We must also agree that the present position of the sermon in many churches as the main teaching instrument is a flawed one. To expect the sermon to contain all the teaching for the people of God is to weigh it down with too heavy baggage. Churches must somehow persuade adults that they need Sunday School for learning the basics of faith just as much as their children do.

However, despite his detailed research, one can also find fault in Norrington's conclusions. He is largely unaware of the "New Homiletic" and the renewed interest in preaching which is growing in North America. (For far too many European theologians Christian insights from across the Atlantic can be comfortably ignored!) The only exponent of the "New Homiletic" whom he quotes, Richard Eslinger, is relegated to a footnote. Norrington considers the rise of narrative preaching as merely "a cosmetic alteration" which leaves the "basic inadequacy of the method untouched." He dismisses this movement in a single sentence:

"The recent development of preaching as story-telling is a similarly superficial adjustment and is part of a movement which still has high hopes for the future of the sermon" (page 80).

But can story-telling, which is both a Biblical method and a basic human need, be so easily dismissed? Could it be that Norrington is neglecting a vital method of Christian communication and is falling into the same sin which he accuses the church of committing?

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Moreover, Norrington attacks the sermon because it cannot possible meet the immediate needs of the disparate collection of individuals who meet on Sunday mornings. But surely the sermon is not meant to address each individual's unique problems, but rather to address the communal consciousness of the people of God, who, though many, are one body in Christ and can therefore be challenged, encouraged, rebuked, renewed, etc., as one body. The people of God gathered for worship is not a rag-bag of diverse interests when it comes to their one over-arching need, the loving presence of God in Christ. Norrington should study the theology of the church as well at its sociology!

Denis Campbell.

Thomas G. Long - *Hebrews: a commentary*, Louisville, Kentucky. John Knox Press. 1997. [Interpretation Series].

Thomas G. Long - *Matthew: a commentary*, Louisville, Kentucky. Westminster John Knox press. 1997. [Westminster Bible Companion Series].

When a professor of preaching, who is also a fine preacher, starts writing Bible commentaries, those of us whose task is the interpretation of scripture for the modern world, should sit up and take notice. Tom Long is the author of some excellent books on preaching, including "*The Senses of preaching*" [1988], "*Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*" [1989], and "*The Witness of Preaching*" [1989]. Now he attempts to ease the burden of preachers and teachers by providing commentaries which are easily accessible to the lay person or the overworked pastor, and yet are faithful to the latest findings of scholarship. The result is a delight for anyone who values the Biblical witness. All of Long's considerable skill in making the message of scripture live in a modern context is on display in these volumes. These are not

commentaries to be left on the shelf for consultation when required, but rather church leaders should read them through from cover to cover with notebook at the ready.

In the commentary on *Hebrews*, Long acknowledges his debt to the specialists, on whose shoulders he stands. He praises Attridge, Lane, Ellingworth, Wilson and Hurst. In their company he has faced the thorny problems of *Hebrews* and produced a commentary full of wonderful insights expressed as only a preacher of his calibre can express them.

Right at the beginning he sums up the author's purpose. *Hebrews* is not a letter at all, but a sermon addressed to a weary congregation.

The threat of this congregation is not that they are charging off in the wrong direction; they do not have enough energy to charge off anywhere. The threat here is that, worn down and worn out, they will drop their end of the rope and drift away. Tired of walking the walk, many of them are considering taking a walk, leaving the community and falling away from the faith. [page 3].

The task of generating energy in this congregation requires a work of practical theology, which is exactly what *Hebrews* is. Long applauds as the author/preacher employs all the tricks of a good preacher, the appeal to reason, the pregnant pause, the vision of the future, the recollection of our glorious past, and above all the example of Jesus Christ as pioneer and perfecter. Long never misses an opportunity to draw comparisons with the church in the twentieth century.

Commenting on 3: 1-6, Long summarises the work of Jesus in the midst of the church today.

Wherever Jesus Christ, the pioneer apostle, is at work, however far-flung, the church is to follow, even if it limps

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as it goes; whatever Christ is doing, however demanding, the church is to roll up its sleeves and join in, even if its muscles are not so strong. Whatever truths Christ is teaching, however controversial, the church is to confess and proclaim them, even if it stammers as it speaks.
[page48]

The figure of Melchizedek, the priest, in chapter 7, which is often a puzzle to the men and women in the pew, is explained with typical vividness. Melchizedek functions something like the “three kings” of countless Christmas pageants, an amalgam of biblical material and popular piety. His qualities, righteousness, peace and timeliness point forward to the nature of Jesus, the true and perpetual high priest.

When he comes to the great roll call of heroes of faith in chapter eleven, the preacher in Tom Long reveals in the sermonic nature of Hebrews. The call and response structure of this chapter reminds Long of the black preaching tradition in the U.S.A.

CALL: “And what more should I say?” [11:32]

RESPONSE: “Tell it all, brother, tell it all!”

CALL: “O brothers and sisters, time would fail me to tell it all. . . [11:32]

RESPONSE: “No, brother, tell it all!”

CALL: “I’d have to tell about Gideon and Barak, Samson, Jephtha, of David and Samuel and the prophets - [11:32]

RESPONSE: “Yes! Tell it all, brother. Preach on!”
[page 124]

Long’s commentary on *Matthew* is, if anything, less technical than his commentary on Hebrews. However, he never ignores the findings of the critical scholars when they are relevant to Matthew’s message. For example, when in 21:13 Matthew edits Mark’s “my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations,”

to read simply “a house of prayer”. Long notes that this means that the temple was probably destroyed by the time Matthew was writing.

But again it is in Long’s remarkable ability to bring the Bible into the modern world and the modern world into the Bible that gives the reader firstly sheer delight in Long’s mastery of Christian communication, and secondly a desire to learn from him in the task of preaching and teaching.

This commentary is full of “gems”. When the Scribes and Pharisees ask Jesus to show them a sign [12:36], Long comments that the authorities “have now pulled him over and want to see his licence.”

Commenting on the parable of the unmerciful servant [18: 23-25] Long reminds us that “we know too well that the little boat in which we are sailing is floating on a deep sea of grace and that forgiveness is not to be dispensed with an eyedropper, but a fire hose.”

When the mother of the sons of Zebedee ask for a privileged place for her sons [20: 20-28] Long remarks:

“It is, of course, very strenuous for the church to maintain the role of servant leadership. Instead of waiting on tables, the church often wants reserved parking spaces.”

There is always a need for the technical commentary, probing the nuts and bolts of literary and historical criticism to establish what the author meant then. No one who values scripture dare ignore such scholarly work. But what does the Bible mean today? Tom Long’s achievement in these commentaries is to make the findings of the scholars available to ordinary people in the pew in a form which does not require a degree in Biblical Studies in order to be understood. He also conveys the Bible’s message in a form which can inspire contemporary congregations to faith, hope and love in

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the present. After reading them one feels that one has attended a master class in interpreting scripture for today.

Dennis Campbell

Peter R. Carrell *Jesus and the Angels. Angelology and the christology of the Apocalypse of John*, (Cambridge, SNTS monograph 95, 1997)

This book is the author's revised PhD thesis from the University of Durham. The material is organised in eleven chapters, including an introduction and conclusion, each of the other nine chapters presenting its own respective conclusions. An extensive bibliography guides the reader to the primary sources and all relevant scholarly discussions, and there are two indexes of ancient and biblical writings and of subjects covered.

Carrell's exegetical work is concentrated in chapters seven to ten, where the christophanic passages Rev 1: 13-16 (two chapters), 14:14 and 19: 11-16 are the bases for discussion, and this textual study is prefaced by five chapters of a more general nature which prepare the ground by examining OT angelic figures, principal angels, angelomorphic figures and christology, and finally - in the Book of revelation itself - God, Jesus and the revealing angel.

It will be helpful to begin by taking note of the conclusions the author reaches, and then to see by what road he travels. Jesus in the Apocalypse is presented, for Carrell, as both divine Lord and also - formally and functionally - as a visible and glorious angel; this duality both safeguards monotheism (Jesus is co-ordinate with God) and enables Christian worship in the churches John addresses. To put the thesis in a phrase, and angelomorphic christology turns out to be one of Revelation's significant strands. And the importance of this result is that it offers a number of possibilities for the broader study of NT christology and its development: For example, in Revelation angels tend to reinforce

Christ's divinity, whilst in the synoptic Gospels angels tend to highlight Jesus' humanity.

How does Carrell go about his research? Christopher Rowland is Carrell's first interlocutor and his proposal of how angelology influenced the christophany of Rev. 1:13-16 the first point debated; Rowland, through his work on Jewish and Christian apocalypticism, has set the pace for all discussion of 'angelomorphic christology'. Via consideration of material in Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah, our author revises Rowland's idea of how the Rev. 1 christophany was shaped, before broadening his purview to include consideration of various chief angels (e.g. Melchizedek), various exalted humans (e.g. Moses) and the angelomorphic *Logos*, and finally the angel-talk concerning Jesus found in early Christian texts like the Ascension of Isaiah. In all of this examination of the broader context into which John's Apocalypse fits, the high theological status of angels is the point to remember.

The background study, then, is undertaken en route to an examination of certain texts within John's Revelation itself. Here, in general terms, the exalted Jesus is, at one and the same time, both clearly one with God and also functionally equivalent to the revealing angel who appears at every new stage of visionary unfolding. Thus the exalted Jesus at the centre of the divine throne also has the form of a glorious angel (temporarily, i.e. when he comes to John or to his church).

What, then, does Carrell find in the christological material of the key texts to be discussed? As to the christology of Rev.1: 13-16, Carrell upholds the commonly perceived influence of Ezekiel, Daniel and possibly Zechariah but, with reference to I Enoch 106: 2-6, finds the christophany to be less like a theophany and more like an angelophany (or more strictly, an angelomorphism). Rev. 1: 14 does not, for Carrell, necessarily present Jesus as divine - which is not in question - but angelomorphically: Jesus appears this way for a pastoral reason (he is close to his church) and for a

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christological reason (he is distinct from the angels), and does so only temporarily.

Whereas identification of the figure in Rev. 14:14 is more problematic, Carrell nonetheless concludes that an appearance of Jesus Christ is intended and that angelology has also shaped the christology here. Again, the divine Jesus' angelomorphic appearance is only a temporary phenomenon whilst he remains, as it were, separated from the divine throne; he is not an angel but dons angelic dress. And the celestial rider of Rev. 19: 11-16, too, is painted angelologically and not merely messianically: He rides out in angelic form to fulfil an angelic function, yet is not thereby subordinate to God from whose throne he emerges and from whom he is ultimately indistinguishable. Like the majority of scholars working upon John's Apocalypse today, Carrell sees Revelation's Jesus as patently divine.

The reader is well clued into Carrell's methods and the scope of his investigation by pp.13-20, where the author explains all the forbidding-looking technical terms that feature in even so brief a review as ours. The discerning reader will already be wondering by now, why Carrell stops at the three contexts in Revelation that he examines: Why do not other christological passages in John's Revelation come under his scrutiny for angelological influences? In fact, Carrell acknowledges the inherent interest in casting the net more widely; his own contribution is to establish the point sufficiently. His decision to omit consideration of angelology in, for example the targumic, rabbinic and Gnostic literature, or with socio-political factors in mind, is to be similarly explained.

As originally a doctoral thesis, this book is strong on analytical depth but not, for all that, obscure or hard to follow in its argumentation. The general reader who, aware of its misuse, is still tempted to keep John's Revelation at arm's length, would be quickly disabused of some fears by reading so sober and suggestive a study of Revelation's contribution to the overall NT picture of Jesus. The student of the Apocalypse in search of John's precise

christology, meanwhile, will discover some judicious proposals thoughtfully presented.

Gordon Campbell.

Andrew Linzey and Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *After Noah. Animals and the Liberation of Theology* (Mowbray: London, 1997) pp.xix + 156, ISBN 0-264-67450-2

The Jewish and Christian traditions stand accused of fostering attitudes that are detrimental to animals. Animals are often treated instrumentally, used for the sake of what humans want to do, and accorded little in the way of serious rights. But is that not largely the fault of beliefs that can be traced back to the Bible itself, which dignifies human beings in the sight of God, but does nothing to discourage the exploitation of animals, reducing their status to moral insignificance? That is a charge that the co-authors of this volume, a Christian and a Jew, are eager to counter. Theologically, they maintain that 'if to believe in God 'is to do justice' then we have to confront our own unjust dealings with animals as a spiritual priority' (xviii). The argument extends beyond a claim about how we treat animals. It extends to the claim that a proper theology and practice in relation to animals helps the liberation of theology itself; what we do with animals is a crucial factor in our theological and spiritual training. How do they argue this position?

After summoning us 'from exploitation to celebration', they begin by laying Out the essentials of the Jewish tradition as found in the Hebrew Bible, the rabbis and rabbinic developments. From the earliest chapters of Genesis, we discover that animals are central in, not peripheral to, creation and that dominion, where it emphasizes human distinctiveness, inevitably entails human responsibility. The terms of the Noahic covenant include animals and the unfolding story of Israelite legislation shows that our compassion towards animals constitutes an important ingredient in our veiy righteousness. A narrative account of Jewish traditions is then designed to exonerate the Jewish community of many of the

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charges standardly brought against it in terms of neglect of animal welfare. 'It is no empty boast that Judaism has distinguished itself by its concern, historically, for animal welfare' (p.56). Indeed, it is one step ahead of Christianity here, because it has 'invariably held vegetarianism to be the ideal God-given diet for human beings... and... the contemporary recovery of ethical vegetarianism is part and parcel of the rediscovery of a fundamental moral insight of the Jewish tradition' (p.57). No one in the Jewish tradition has been more influential in relation to animal welfare than the medieval philosopher, Moses Maimonides, and space is devoted to his contribution. The argument concludes with (a) an affirmation of the spiritual status of animals, which (or who?) possess souls, which entails (b) that we relate to them as beings that in their way exhibit, if not quite the being, at least the grace and power of God and specifically (c) that we repudiate any act that deliberately causes animal suffering.

In two succeeding chapters, the Christian tradition is explored, many sayings and stories cited and very strong claims made. Basically, that tradition has much in it that teases out the extremely high status either explicitly or implicitly given to animals in the New, as well as Old, Testament. St. John of the Cross, thinking through the relationship of creation and incarnation, seems to hold that 'even non-human creatures... are included within the *imago dei*' (p.79). (Those who attempt to verify such an interpretation of St. John of the Cross have their task complicated by the fact that the end-notes to the chapter have gone awry because of an error on page 78 which puts the end-notes out of line with the end-note numbers in the text itself) Julian of Norwich and Margaret Kempe encourage us to associate the passion of Christ with animal, not just human, suffering. The authors quote Edith Sitwell: 'The wounds of the baited bear, - The blind and weeping bear whom the keepers beat, On his helpless flesh... the tears of the hunted hare' (p.79). The great eschatological scheme of cosmic redemption brings the fruit of the incarnation to bear on animals as well as humans.

But what are 'the spiritual and moral implications of taking seriously the wide range of stories of Christ-like compassion to animals' (p.91)? The stories change our attitudes so that the law of charity is fully applied to them. We learn from others than just St. Francis of the theological importance of friendship with animals. Concretely: 'We must love and pray for even those things like reptiles which may frighten us because only love and prayer can set us in the right relationship to them' (p.102). For the Spirit through whom we pray is the healer of creation. Christians have been negligent: they have commonly failed in this or in any significant celebration of animals; they have ignored questions of treatment and abuse; they have generally failed to think theologically about them. Yet the tradition itself would impel us to do so. In light of the importance of the subject, boldly and entirely seriously we must apply words ascribed to William Temple: 'Theology is still in its infancy' (p.113). So how exactly do animals liberate Jewish and Christian theology? Reflection on them enables us to (a) resist idolatry, which is human self-deification, (b) reject humanism, which is 'man, the measure of all things' (c) repent of our pride, as we manage the animal kingdom (d) prevent innocent suffering. Our injustice to animals is monstrous (if the reviewer may so represent the authors' point without being accused of discrimination against monsters). The volume ends with a suitable summons to serious moral commitment on the basis of our theological convictions.

This volume is both disturbing and frustrating. It is disturbing because there is a strong case to be made for the kinds of conclusions on animal treatment that the authors attain. These are familiar enough, with standard issues of experimentation and vegetarianism at stake. What is disturbing is that many of us, reviewer included, all too often lack the moral courage to think these things through and live consistently with our convictions. One must be grateful for the persistence of these authors in bringing these issues before us and refusing to let us off the hook by some stratagem on our part to marginalize them. At the same time, the volume is frustrating. For it is theologically shallow. The theological principles brought into play certainly warrant

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consideration; the stories of the saints and quotations from the tradition appropriately delight us and make us think, all non-superficially. Yet many will find it all too easy to dismiss the conclusions of this book because of its theology.

The problems set in from the beginning. The distinction between clean and unclean animals and the theology of animal sacrifice recorded in the Pentateuch both 'now strike us as unfair or unfathomable' (p.3). But 'unfair' and 'unfathomable' are entirely different things, and can signal extremely divergent theological attitudes. The authors follow this up. Of Peter's dream about clean and unclean animals in Acts 10, they say that 'some have argued with some justification that the dream is probably symbolic of the inclusion of the Gentiles into the church' - a strangely tentative understatement! But even in that case, they say, the dream appears discouraging for the moral status of animals (p.4). I am not sure why someone should treat that reaction with much theological seriousness. Again, we are reminded of the narrative where Abraham's servant, sent to find a wife for Isaac, judges Rebekah by her attitude to the camels as well as to himself. Further, the story of Balaam's ass is 'testimony to the spiritual significance of our attitudes to animals' (p.24). One must certainly be alert to nuances and levels in the biblical accounts that do not immediately meet the eye or that we culturally conditioned to miss. But many will wonder why this use of Scripture is much better than or very dissimilar to the kind of use made by fundamentalists, who would be scorned on account of it.

Yet we certainly have no fundamentalism here. On the contrary, the theological method followed is that of the narrative: you tell stories from the Bible and tradition over the centuries and allow them to form your world-view accordingly, specifically in relation to animals. Of course, the authors go beyond narrative, but in the fourth chapter they highlight the function of story and imagination in forming our theological views. The effect of this is that apocryphal stories of Jesus, like the famous one in the Gospel of Thomas, where Jesus makes sparrows of clay which then become

animated, appear to be theologically just as normative for our attitudes to animals as is anything else. Clearly here we are entering into an arena of contest over theological method in contemporary theology. But little is done in this volume to buttress these assumptions and not enough confidence is instilled in us to give the authors the benefit of the doubt, and conclude that, given the space and time, they could defend themselves rigorously.

Pity. These are weighty matters and we need to heed what the authors are telling us.

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Ben Witherington iii. *Grace in Galatia. A Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998.

In spite of divided opinions about its purpose and religious context, all readers of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians would agree that it is essential reading if they are to understand Paul correctly. They may not go so far as Martin Luther, quoted in Witherington's new commentary, *Grace in Galatia* that: 'The Epistle to the Galatians is my Epistle; I have betrothed myself to it; it is my wife' (though Witherington also quotes John Wesley who was not impressed by Luther's commentary on the epistle, where he asserts 'the author On the other hand, John Wesley castigates Paul in his epistle because he '...makes nothing out, clears up not one considerable difficulty; ... he is quite shallow in his remarks on many passages, and muddy and confused almost on all...') but they would without doubt . for this reason, Witherington's commentary is to be welcomed, though it could not be said that it is contributing to a field which has been neglected of late in New Testament scholarship.

In his introduction Witherington deals with some of the more contentious issues raised by the Epistle to the Galatians. He supports a Southern Galatian hypothesis, using the standard

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argumentsthe existence of the Via Sebaste, evidence from Acts 16:6 and 18:23, his Gentile audience's acquaintance with Judaism ... and an early date 'no date better explains all the factors and details discussed above than A.D. 49 or just before Paul went off to the Jerusalem council recorded in Acts 15'. (p.12) In coming to his conclusions about date Witherington is prepared to pay more attention to the accounts in Acts (For example, Of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15) that many recent scholars. He argues that '...while a slight preference should probably be given to the account in Galatians over what we find in Acts, it would be best to scrutinize critically both sources and see them as of about equal weight in assessing what happened at the Jerusalem Council' (p. 14), describing the conclusion of some scholars that Acts cannot be trusted as a 'council of despair' p. 13. The strength of this section is the clarity of the arguments advanced, a strength which will be greatly appreciated by theological undergraduates, rather than in the advocacy of any new compelling case which would persuade his peers to change their minds.

A third section of his introduction deals with the opponents of Paul, the 'agitators'. There is an excellent caveat against the dangers of the over enthusiastic use of 'mirror-reading' to identify Paul's opponents and a list of 11 points to be borne in mind when dealing with the question of identifying opponents in Paul's Letters. His conclusion is that 'it seems reasonable and probably that the agitators in Galatia were Jewish Christians who wanted the Galatians to be circumcised and follow at least some of the Law, in particular its ritual aspects.' (p.25)

The section on the rhetoric of Galatians is one of the longest sections of the Epistle and contains a detailed dialogue with H.D. Betz whose commentary on Galatians in 1979 put the question of rhetoric firmly on the agenda of commentators on Galatians. Witherington argues that 'Galatians is an example of deliberative rhetoric intending to convince the audience by various means to take a particular course of action in the near future'; (p.27) rather than forensic rhetoric as H. D. Betz suggested. This discussion

gets to the heart of the important question of the purpose of the Epistle .. is it to persuade the Galatians to continue to walk in the freedom of the Spirit rather than return, in Paul's perspective, to the slavery of circumcision, rather than Paul's justification of his own past. As Kennedy, quoted on p. 27 says: 'The letter looks to the immediate future, not to judgment of the past, and the question to be decided by the Galatians was not whether Paul had been right in what he had said or done, but what they themselves were going to believe and to do'. While it is a very important discussion, however, the context in which it is put, a debate between H.D.Betz and the author on whether we find deliberative or forensic (or even epideictic) rhetoric in the Epistle is to obscure the fundamental issue for the average modern reader for which this book was intended and for which it is admirably suited. Clearly every author has to draw a fine line between enjoying the luxury of the clarity of technical language and the risking the possibility of misunderstanding by using non technical language; in this particular section, the reviewer feels that the author have erred with profit on the side of non technical language.

The final section in the introduction deals with Galatians in its social setting. Witherington points out that not a great deal has been done to analyze Galatians in terms of its social and cultural dimensions, using the tools of the social sciences and cultural anthropology, and yet the Epistle 'raises the questions about how one gets in, how one stays, and how one goes on in the Christian community ... and what sorts of rites of passage are involved' (p.41) Such Middle Eastern concepts as honour, shame, power structures etc. Play an important role in the Epistle and the author takes accounts of these where appropriate. . Clearly this is an important contribution of the commentary and one for which users of the commentary will be grateful. The ultimate usefulness and hence success of the book will depend to an important extent on how convincing and instructive readers find this aspect of the book.

This is a well written commentary, suitable for a wide ranging audience, ranging from the Christian keen to learn more about a

foundational New Testament book to the scholar looking for new insights on a well discussed book. It follows, however, several other well written and researched commentaries on Galatians and lead this reviewer to wonder, as he looks at a row of Galatians commentaries on his bookshelf, whether in this computer age a more efficient way could not be found to pass on the world of scholarship's accumulated knowledge about a New Testament book. Has the traditional commentary, perhaps, served its day, to be replaced by updatable CD Roms?

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